

Minutes of the Parish Forum held on 5th May 2024

Chair: Hilary Wrack

Minutes Secretary: Terry Gomez

Father Richard in attendance

The Chair told the meeting that she had produced an Excel spreadsheet with all those who have already volunteered for different jobs in the parish and that it would be published in the newsletter and others would be invited to add their names to jobs they feel able to take on. She made particular appeal for other musicians to ensure that the new young organist was not overwhelmed.

There was an appeal for people to join a social committee; Rachel volunteered to co-ordinate the group, which includes Terry, Miriam and Rachel.

Father Richard is keen to recruit more people to act as welcomers to mass and to other parish events; he plans to hold a meeting for volunteers and to organise training. Sister Dymphna pointed the importance of the role

The parish also needs to expand the group of volunteers to undertake counting of the collection. this is currently undertaken on Mondays and Tuesdays in the Parish Room but could be done at other times depending on what suited those who volunteer.

The Chair raised the issue of needing to recruit younger volunteers to ensure that parish life could keep moving forward. Teresa Williams pointed out that there are already some young volunteers, including readers such as Maria it is possible to provide training for any young volunteers. It was suggested that those doing the Duke of Edinburgh awards may be interested in volunteering within the parish.

Father Richard said that the welcome committee should

1. honour people - a vision
2. make sure that whenever there is an event in the parish it is properly organised and that information about the event should be circulated to everyone.
3. Look at all the possible pathways into the church life so that we can better engage with and nurture people who come searching for God.

The Chair said that she and Father Richard have discussed the ways in which the Community Hub, which happens on the first Thursday of each month, is an important way in which the church serves the needs of the local community and that we need to look at ways in which we enhance our involvement with the local community.

It was suggested that Marion be invited to serve on the social committee as she organises the Golden Friendship group. the suggestion was accepted.

Rachel said that is important to make church more welcoming for mothers with small children and suggested that there was scope for a parents and toddlers group as one of the activities within the parish.

The Chair spoke about the importance of all the parish activities, especially those which reached out to the whole community developing to develop the concept of synodality, that is, of walking together, sharing responsibility for spreading the Gospel and living it through our parish life, as Pope Francis has called on us to do.

Pentecost: There followed an extensive discussion about how the parish would celebrate this great feast.

1. Pray the Novena from Ascension Day until Pentecost, after daily mass.
2. Emma Ndifor is organising the African community to lead the liturgy at Pentecost with processions for the Gospel and Offertory which will include singing and dancing.
3. Lena Johnson suggested that the African community would lead on prayers on the day and that we should organise a bring and share lunch after mass as part of the celebrations.
4. Father Richard suggested there should be a meeting after mass to do for Pentecost such as adoration, prayers altogether with refreshments.
5. Lena suggested that the Novena prayers be listed for the following days so that people can pray at home with their families.

In all of this we are trying to be synodal, as Pope Francis is asking us to be.

Father Richard and Hilary have met with Suzy and Sarah to discuss the physical uses of the church grounds, notably the allotment. As a result Hilary has contacted Bedford Council to seek permission to cut down a tree which is seriously in the way.

The rose garden has not be very well attended lately. We need contact details of people who are able to undertake maintenance. We need a garden maintenance structure. We might need to hire a gardener and Rachel suggested a couple who might be willing to take on the work for a reasonable hourly rate.

Father Richard also know some gardeners. It was agreed that the roses and memorials needed to be treated with professional attention. Miriam suggested Contacting Father Patrick who had started the rose garden and might have a list of all the people who had had roses planted in memory of a loved one.

The next meeting will be 14th July.

Rachel said that someone from the African Community should be on the Social Committee. Terry as a member of the Chisen Committee is able to represent them at Social Committee meetings.

Pat Wood volunteered to be on the counting group.